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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 30, 2010

NOAA Sets \$15 Fee for the National Saltwater Angler Registry

Fishermen in Hawaii, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, U.S.V.I. must register or renew in 2011

NOAA announced today that the fee for registering with the National Saltwater Angler Registry will be \$15 as of January 1. The change affects anglers, spear fishers and for-hire fishing vessels in Hawaii, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and U.S.V.I., although some anglers are exempt.

Fishermen in other coastal states are exempted from the federal requirement when they comply with state saltwater license or registration regulations. Twenty-two of the nation's 24 coastal states have saltwater angler registries or licenses and have been exempted from the federal requirement because they are providing registry information to the National Saltwater Angler Registry.

The National Saltwater Angler Registry helps NOAA to gauge the health of marine fisheries. Congress created the registry, a national directory of anglers, through the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006 to improve surveys of fishermen used to assess the health of fish stocks and the economic contributions of anglers. Through effective regulations based on data collected through the registry, NOAA helps to preserve recreational fishing for the anglers, fishing businesses, coastal communities and millions of Americans whose lives and livelihoods are connected to saltwater fishing.

The law authorized NOAA's Fisheries Service to charge a fee for the annual registration beginning in 2011. Unless fishermen meet one of the exemptions specified in the law, they are required to register if they are fishing in federal waters, or are targeting – or might catch – anadromous fish. These are species like salmon, striped bass, shad and river herring that live in saltwater but spawn in fresh water. In addition, non-exempt anglers who registered in 2010 and are still required to do so have one year from their initial registration date to renew.

Fishermen are also exempt from registering if they are under 16; only fish on federally permitted charter, party or guide boats; hold a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit; or are fishing commercially under a valid license. Fishermen who hold a valid fishing license from an exempted state are automatically entered into the registry, and do not need to take further action. Finally, people fishing in an exempted state who are not required to have a saltwater fishing license in that state – as is sometimes the case with seniors or active duty military – are not required to register.

Persons who meet the definition of "indigenous person" in the final rule for the registry program are required to register, but will not be required to pay the registration fee if they affirm during the registration process that they qualify and acknowledge that submission of a false statement is a violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Information on who qualifies as an indigenous person will be posted on the registration website at <http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov>.

The National Saltwater Angler Registry is part of a major initiative to improve how NOAA's Fisheries Service gathers, analyzes and reports recreational fishing data. The goal of the Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is to ensure that the data scientists,

managers, stock assessors and others need to effectively conserve our nation's ocean resources is available, accessible, held to the most exacting scientific standards, and broadly trusted by our partners and stakeholders in the fishing community and others. For more information or to register, visit <http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov> or call toll-free 1-888-MRIP-411.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.